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TAGS: PREL SU CG RW BE UNSC
SUBJECT: SPECIAL ENVOY NATSIOS' MEETING WITH THE BELGIAN
MFA, DECEMBER 15, 2006

Classified By: DCM William Imbrie, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Sudan Special Envoy Natsios conducted a Darfur roundtable on December 15, 2006 with experts from the Belgian MFA led by Director for African Affairs Trouveroy (the former Belgian Ambassador to Sudan) and Director of International Organization Affairs (both A/S-equivalent) Frankinet. The Special Envoy used the meeting to brief the Belgians on his just concluded trip to Sudan, and on developments concerning Darfur likely to occur at the UNSC in late December and early January. He indicated also that, based on his discussions with President Bush, the USG was determined to bring about pressure on the Bashir regime, should Bashir continue to obstruct Kofi Annan's plan for PKO, or continue to commit atrocities against non-combatants in Darfur. Belgium joins the UNSC in January ¶2007.

¶2. (C) The Belgian side noted several Darfur-related developments that have occurred recently within an EU and a regional context. Trouveroy indicated that the EU's Special Envoy for Darfur, Pekka Haavisto, would be leaving his post in February (as would Aldo Ajello, the long-serving Special Envoy for the Great Lakes). In a discussion of AMIS, the Belgians said the Rwandans had considered adding an additional battalion, but were extremely reluctant to do so absent more information on funding. The EU (read Development Commissioner Michel) was loath to pay more -- the Commission preferred for individual member states to offer more money directly.

¶3. (C) The Belgian side agreed fully with Special Envoy Natsios' comment on the difficulty of devising an effective sanctions regime. Securing Chinese acquiescence would probably prove especially difficult, Frankinet argued, adding that it would not be impossible. She noted that the Chinese had been surprisingly helpful at the last Addis Ababa conference on Darfur. The continuing dispute over the Iranian nuclear program was a further complication. The Belgians expressed interest in Special Envoy Natsios' suggestion that sanctions might be targeted at particular individuals in the regime.

¶4. (C) At the meeting's conclusion, Trouveroy indicated that the Belgians were growing increasingly concerned about the Darfur conflict's spillover effect on Central Africa. The recent fighting in the CAR had sounded a loud alarm. Continuing conflict could prove destabilizing not only in Eastern Congo, but also in Tanzania. Given this fear, the Belgians supported the need to send a strong message to Khartoum as soon as possible. Korologos

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